

Alexander James Dallas to Andrew Jackson, April 12, 1815, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

SECRETARY DALLAS TO JACKSON.1

1 This letter was published in the *National Intelligencer*, Sept. 6, 1828,

Department of War, April 12, 1815.

I assure you, sir, that it is a very painful task to disturb, for a moment, the enjoyment of the honorable gratification which you must derive, as well from the consciousness of the great services that you have rendered to your country, as from the expressions of approbation and applause, which the nation has bestowed upon those services. But representations have been recently made to the President, respecting certain acts of military opposition to the civil magistrate, that require immediate attention, not only in vindication of the just authority of the laws, but to rescue your own conduct from all unmerited reproach.

There have been transmitted to the President copies of the letter of Mr. Reed, your Aid-de-Camp to the Editor of the Louisiana Courier, dated 21st of February; of your general orders, dated the 28 of February, commanding certain French subjects to retire from New Orleans; of a publication in the Louisiana Courier of the 3d of March under the signature of "a citizen of Louisiana of French Origin", animadverting upon the General Order;² of a second General Order of the 5th of march, enforcing the Order of the 28th of February; of your letter of the 6th of February, announcing the unofficial intelligence of the peace; and of a third General Order of the 8th of march, suspending the execution of the order of the 28th of February, except as far as it relates to the Chevalier de Tousard.

2 Printed in Parton, II. 309–311.

These documents have been accompanied with a statement, that on the 5th of March, the writer of the publication of the 3d of March, Mr. Louallier, a member of the Legislature of the state of Louisiana, was arrested by your order, on account of the publication, and lodged in the barracks; that on the same day Mr. Hall, the Judge of the District, issued a writ of Habeas Corpus in the case of Mr. Louallier; but before the writ was served, the Judge himself was arrested, by your order, for issuing it, and conducted under a strong guard to the barracks; that on the 8th of March Mr. Dick, the Attorney of the United States, having obtained from Mr. Lewis, a state Judge, a writ of Habeas Corpus in the case of Judge Hall, which was served upon you, he was arrested by your order, and lodged in the barracks; that Judge Hall was released on the 12th of March, but escorted to a place out of the City of New Orleans, with Orders not to return, until information of peace was officially received and officially announced; and that Mr. Dick was released on the same day, and permitted to remain in Town, but with orders to report himself, from day to day, until discharged.

From these representations it would appear that the Judicial power of the united states has been resisted, the liberty of the press has been suspended, and the Consul and subjects of a friendly Government have been exposed to great inconvenience, by an exercise of Military force and command. The President views the subject, in its present aspect, with surprize and solicitude; but in the absence of all information from yourself, relative to your conduct and the motives for your conduct, he abstains from any decision, or even the expression of an Opinion, upon the case, in hopes that such explanations may be afforded, as will reconcile his sense of public duty with a continuance of the confidence, which he reposes in your Judgment, discretion, and patriotism. He instructs me, therefor, to request, that you will, with all possible dispatch, transmit to this Department a full report of the transactions, which have been stated. And, in the meantime, it is presumed, that

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every extraordinary exertion of military authority has ceased, in consequence of the cessation of all danger, open or covert, upon the restoration of peace.

The President instructs me to take this opportunity of requesting, that a conciliatory deportment may be observed towards the state authorities, and the citizens of New Orleans. He is persuaded, that Louisiana justly Estimates the value of the talents and valour, which have been displayed for her defence and safety; and that there will be no disposition in any part of the nation, to review, with severity, the efforts of a commander, acting in a crises of unparalleled difficulty, upon the impulse of the purest patriotism

I have the honor to be,